Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management

Project:	Drinking Water Treatment System & Secondary Water Source Rountree Facility
Grantee:	Regional Water Management Foundation
Lead:	Santa Cruz County General Services Department
Location:	City of Watsonville – Rountree Correctional Facility
Funders:	California Department of Water Resources (Prop. 1 Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Grant Program); Santa Cruz County
Amount:	$800,000 (DWR Grant); $0 (local matching funds waived for economically disadvantaged communities)
Year:	2024-2026
Status:	Proposition 1 Round 2 Implementation Grant Awarded May 2023

Purpose: The County of Santa Cruz (County) will implement drinking water treatment system upgrades to improve drinking water quality, as well as conduct a feasibility study to evaluate potential approaches to add water system reliability and redundancy at the Rountree Correctional Facility.

Issues Addressed: Drinking water contaminants such as hexavalent chromium (Cr(VI)) and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in addition to addressing compliance violations at the Rountree Water Treatment Facility, located in a designated economically disadvantaged community.

Summary: The Rountree Water System is in coastal southern Santa Cruz County in an area that is designated as economically disadvantaged (US Census, American Communities Survey 2014-2018). The water system serves the correctional facility, the adjacent County-owned Buena Vista landfill and nearby facilities. Annual production at the facility varies, in 2022 approximately 3.6 million gallons was produced. The population served includes approximately 160 residents and 75 non-transient individuals (on-site staff). The water system currently does not treat identified drinking water contaminants and is designated “at risk” due to the lack of a secondary water source.

The proposed work includes:

- Implementing an ion exchange water treatment system to reduce hexavalent chromium and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- Conducting a feasibility study of the water system to consider the most appropriate approaches to add reliability and redundancy.

Results: The project will improve drinking water quality in the Rountree water system from the upgraded treatment system that will reduce hexavalent chromium in treated water to less than the California drinking water maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 parts per billion (µg/L).

The feasibility study will evaluate the suitability of potential approaches to add reliability and redundancy in the water system. Study results will be used by County staff to determine the best option for adding a secondary water source, apply for funds, and implement the identified infrastructure.